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LA CRISE DU PROTESTANTISME FRANÇAIS. Par P. E. PORTALIÉ;  
*Études Religieuses, Philosophiques, Historiques, et Littéraires*, Juin,  
Août, et Septembre, 1896.

FRENCH Protestantism has reached a crisis in its history. It has suffered for years from a division in its ranks into liberals and orthodox. This division is killing Protestantism. Attempts at reconciliation have reached a crisis at the Synod of Sedan, June 1896.

The purpose of these articles is: (1) to show the present state of French Protestantism; (2) to estimate its proposed achievements in our country; (3) to seek the causes of the gradual extinction of its churches; (4) to conduct the entire discussion in a purely historical spirit.

If Protestants have been guilty of vituperation and flagrant misrepresentation of Catholics, we shall exhibit no such spirit.

French Protestantism can be divided into three principal groups: the Lutheran church, with 77,000 souls; the independent churches, with 11,000 souls; the Reformed church, with 540,000 adherents.

There are other independent churches of foreign importation with small followings, as the Methodists and Baptists, but the French spirit is hostile to these exotic ravings (*rêveries exotiques*). It is an incontestable fact that the coexistence of these different churches, having each its work and its societies, is one of the scourges of Protestantism.

The Calvinistic church in France far outnumbers all the rest. Now, is there unity in this church? Is unity possible? Calvinism has always offered the illogical contrast of a synodal organization strongly authoritative and a principle essentially revolutionary. In the course of time and in various phases this contradiction worked itself out in deeds.

Immediately after the battle of Waterloo France was invaded by large numbers of rigorous Calvinists, who pushed to the extreme the doctrines of predestination and the uselessness of works. This brutal dogmatism embraced by the young pastors stirred up the most vigorous opposition to the ancient school and prepared the way for destructive German criticism and Renan's *Vie de Jésus*. Renan at once had a very large following. The result was a denial of the supernatural element in Christianity and the widest liberty in the interpretation of Scripture. The audacity of these negations aroused orthodoxy, which immediately prepared for the meeting of a national synod. The synod met at Paris June 6, 1872. After stormy debates they voted as follows: "The supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures in the matter of faith and salvation by faith in Jesus Christ—the only Son of God—who died for our sins and arose again for our justification."

It voted further that candidates for ordination must subscribe to this declaration.

It remains to the liberals to submit or separate. Strangely enough they do neither, and Protestantism is left in that uncertain condition which is neither unity nor schism—a condition of organized anarchy ruling every sphere of activity in the church. This anarchy exists not only between the two factions but within each of the factions. There are no common rules admitted by all. Attempts are made to draft a discipline, but who will obey it? What legal sanction has it? The pastors enjoy an exaggerated independence. What is still worse—think of the spiritual anarchy!

Here, then, we come to the true crisis in French Protestantism; it is unable to escape a terrible dilemma, either schism or apostasy. If schism is perpetuated it is death. Peace can be concluded only upon the ruins of the faith.

In the midst of this perplexity a third party, the moderate right, arises. It opposes the theory “everything or nothing,” advocates a theology of the conscience, and makes Christianity a *life* of the heart. Ostensibly it is with the orthodox, but its closest affinities are with the liberals.

Thus matters go on from bad to worse until the Synod of Sedan convenes June 2, 1896.

The synod is confronted by many grave problems, such as mixed marriages, religious indifference, deficit in the budget. This last seriously affects theological students, pastors, and the education of pastors’ children. All these things are consequences of the division.

But the gravest of all the problems is: What can be done to restore unity? The parties are well organized, the debates are spirited, and the conference ends with an apparent reconciliation. But we do not fear to affirm that this assembly was fatal to Protestantism, because it marks a decisive step of orthodoxy towards liberalism. Its contradictory and equivocal votes conceal, with the danger of more complete failures in the near future, a real betrayal of Christ, of the faith, and of souls.

M. Portalé assured us that his discussion should be conducted in the purely historical spirit. We had a right, then, to expect samples of all the facts, a judicial calm, a sympathetic attitude towards the entire situation, even though the criticism might be adverse. It is difficult to see how he has met the requirement in any one of these particulars. He rather appears from beginning to end as an advocate, indeed as a consistent Jesuit. His readers must consequently, while learning from him, keep both eyes wide open.

The French Protestants left the mother church, and in pursuing their own unpiloted way have been wrecked upon the rocks of anarchism and infidelity. What shall they do now? He does not tell us in words, but the inference can hardly be mistaken. Correct the initial mistake, come back to the mother church, and all will be well.

It is extremely improbable that French Protestants will ever consent to such doctrines as are found in the Pope's last encyclical, *e. g.*, "The dispensation of the divine mysteries was not granted by God indiscriminately to all Christians, but to the apostles and their successors."

Moreover it may be that his view of Protestantism is too limited. Possibly the very *rêveries exotiques* which he dismisses so summarily may be an element in the further development of French Protestantism.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

J. W. MONCRIEF.

EARLY BRITISH CHRISTIANITY. By F. HAVERFIELD; *The English Historical Review*, July 1896.

OF the first bearers of Christianity to Britain, of the time of its introduction, and of the section of Christendom from which it was brought we are entirely ignorant. The claim that one of the apostles—no less than six have been named—first preached the gospel in the island is supported by no sort of evidence. The story of King Lucius is without historic basis. The celebrated passage in Tertullian would seem to fix the date at the beginning of the third century, but its "rhetorical coloring" "forbids precise conclusions." With the opening of the fourth century we reach sure historical ground. In 304 the persecution of Diocletian was felt in Britain, to which later ages ascribe the martyrdom of St. Alban. At the Council of Arles, held in 314, three British bishops were present from York, London, and Lincoln. There is ample literary proof that "an organized church existed at the outset of the fourth century." By the end of the century Pelagius was actively engaged in sowing his heresies. "By 400 Christianity had made vast progress in Britain."

Archæology throws light on early British Christianity in at least three respects: (1) The Christian monogram, Chi-Rho, has been found on mosaics, building stones, pavements, cups, rings, lamps, etc. To the fourth century certainly some and perhaps most of these objects must be referred. (2) Inscriptions on stone are less numerous, and can only plausibly be ascribed to the fourth century. Two tombstones belonging to this age have recently been dug up on which were found the phrase, *plus minus*, a Christian phrase "used of a man's length of life." (3) To monograms and inscriptions must be added the discov-